

Amendment and Response

Applicant: Samuel M. Lester et al.

Serial No.: 10/706,387

Filed: November 12, 2003

Docket No.: 10015833-1

Title: MODULAR PRINTING SYSTEM

REMARKS

The following Remarks are made in response to the Non-Final Office Action mailed November 3, 2005, in which claims 1-12, 22 and 26-28 were rejected, and claims 26-28 were objected to. With this amendment, claims 1, 6, 13-21, and 29 have been cancelled without prejudice, claims 30 and 31 have been added, and claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 22, 23, and 25 have been amended. Claims 2-5, 7-12, 22-28, and 30-31 are currently pending in the application and are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

Claim Objections

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 8 because of an informality in the fourth line of the claim regarding the phrase "a print media path configured to transfer of print media from the first." With this Response, claim 8 has been amended to delete the word "of" in the aforementioned phrase. As a result, claim 8 is no longer an improper sentence, and the Examiner's rejection is believed to be fully addressed. Therefore, the objection of claim 8 is respectfully requested to be withdrawn.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 12 for reciting "without user invention" rather than "without user intervention." With this response, claim 12 has been amended to recite "without user intervention" as requested by the Examiner. Consequently, the objection of claim 12 is believed to have been addressed, and the withdrawal of the objection of claim 12 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103**Claims 1-7**

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Isobe et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,781,823 ("Isobe"), and claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Isobe in view of Murahashi et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,901,276 ("Murahashi") as clarified in an telephone communication with the Examiner on January 26, 2006. With this amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been cancelled, and claim 7 has been amended into independent form to incorporate the limitations of original claims 1 and 6. Amended, independent claim 7 is not believed to be taught or otherwise suggested by the cited references.

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In particular, none of the cited references teach or suggest a printing system including a first printer and a second printer each including a controller, **“wherein the controllers are configured for communicating between the first printer and the second printer to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer”**. Although Isobe discloses a image forming system including two printers, **Isobe fails teach or suggest any master/slave relationship between the two printers** (see Office Action, page 5, paragraph 16 Examiner statement with respect to claim 22).

Murahashi also fails to disclose printer controllers configured to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first and second printers. More specifically, Murahashi discloses individual printers that can be placed in a master mode or a slave mode (col. 2, lines 30-35). However, the Murahashi passages cited by the Examiner in the January 26, 2006 telephone conversation (col. 9, lines 8-14) merely describe the interaction between a master printer and one or more slave printers not how the master/slave relationship is determined. In fact, Murahashi teaches the determination of which printer is a master and which printer(s) is a slave (i.e. the master/slave relationship) based upon user input communicated to the CPU 100 of a printer via a touch panel display 500 (col. 12, lines 6-37). The printers themselves, or more particularly, the control sections 100 of the printers are not configured to negotiate with each other to determine the master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer. In view of the above, Murahashi fails to teach or suggest a first printer and a second printer each including a controller, “wherein the controllers are configured for communicating between the first printer and the second printer to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer” as recited in claim 7.

For at least the above-described reasons, the features of claim 7 are not taught or otherwise suggested by the cited references, Isobe and Murahashi. Consequently, claim 7 is believed to be allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Each of claims 2-5 depend from amended, independent claim 7, which as described above is believed to be allowable over Isobe and Murahashi. Therefore, dependent claims 2-5 are also believed to be allowable over the cited references, and the rejections of claims 2-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are respectfully requested to be withdrawn.

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Claim 8-12

Claims 8-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Isobe.

Amended, independent claim 8 relates to a printing system and recites first printer including a first controller and a second printer including a second controller **“wherein the first and second controllers are configured for communication with one another to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer.”** This is similar to the feature of claim 7 emphasized in the discussion above. Therefore, for similar reasons as described with respect to amended, independent claim 7, amended, independent claim 8 recites features not taught or otherwise suggested by the cited references, namely two printers each having a controller, “wherein the first and second controllers are configured for communication with one another to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer.” Consequently, independent claim 8 is believed to be allowable, and the Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Each of claims 9-12 depend from amended, independent claim 8, which as described above is believed to be allowable over Isobe. Therefore, dependent claims 9-12 are also believed to be allowable over Isobe, and the rejections of claims 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are respectfully requested to be withdrawn.

Claim 22-28

Claims 22 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Isobe in view of Murahashi. Amended, independent claim 22 recites **providing a first printer, providing a second printer, connecting the first printer to the second printer to provide a communication link between the first and second printers, and “negotiating between the first printer and the second printer . . . to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer.”** For similar reasons, as described above with respect to amended, independent claim 7, Isobe and Murahashi fail to teach or otherwise suggest such limitations.

Isobe fails to teach or suggest any master/slave relationship between the two printers (see Office Action, page 5, paragraph 16 Examiner statement with respect to claim 22). In addition, although Murahashi discloses individual printers that can be placed in a master

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mode or a slave mode (col. 2, lines 30-35), Murahashi teaches the determination of which printer is a master and which printer(s) is a slave (i.e. the master/slave relationship) based upon user input communicated to the CPU 100 of a printer via a touch panel display 500 (col. 12, lines 6-37). The printers themselves, or more particularly, the control sections 100 of the printers are not configured to negotiate with each other to determine the master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer. In view of the above, the cited references fail to teach or suggest a method including "negotiating between the first printer and the second printer . . . to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer."

For at least the above-described reasons, the features of amended, independent claim 22 are not taught or otherwise suggested by the cited references, Isobe and Murahashi. Consequently, claim 22 is believed to be allowable, and the Applicant respectfully requests the rejection of claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claim 26 depends from independent claim 22, which as described above is believed to be allowable over Isobe in view of Murahashi. Therefore, dependent claim 26 is also believed to be allowable over the cited references, and the rejection of claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested to be withdrawn.

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Isobe in view of Murahashi and further in view of Kaufman et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,151,037 ("Kaufman"). Claim 27 depends from independent claim 22, which, as described above, includes features not taught or otherwise suggested by Isobe in view of Murahashi. Kaufman fails to alter this analysis. More specifically, Kaufman discloses two printhead stations both being controlled by a single and separate controller 50 (col. 4, lines 53-61; Figure 3). Since Kaufman uses a single controller that is not part of either one of the printhead stations, neither printhead station controls the other, and therefore, there is not a master/slave relationship to determine. Therefore, Kaufman fails to teach the limitations of claim 27 that are not taught or suggested by Isobe in view of Murahashi, namely a method including "negotiating between the first printer and the second printer . . . to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer." Accordingly, Claim 27 is believed to be allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

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Claims 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Isobe in view of Murahashi and further in view of Oyumi U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0066565 ("Oyumi"). Claim 28 depends from independent claim 22, which, as described above, is not taught or otherwise suggested by Isobe in view of Murahashi. Oyumi fails to alter this analysis. In particular, although one embodiment of Oyumi uses a master printer and slave printer arrangement, nothing is disclosed in Oyumi relating to how the master printer and slave printers designations are determined (see for example, paragraphs 0098-0113). As such, Oyumi fails to teach or suggest negotiating between the first printer and the second printer . . . to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer as recited in claim 22 from which claim 28 depends. Therefore, Oyumi fails to teach the limitations of claim 28 that are not taught or suggested by Isobe in view of Murahashi. Accordingly, Claim 28 is believed to be allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 23-25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 23-25 each depend from independent claim 22, which as described above is believed to be allowable over the cited references. Therefore, claims 23-25 are no longer believed to be dependent upon a rejected base claim, and claims 23-25 are believed to be allowable in their current format.

New Claims

With this Response, claims 30 and 31 have been added and recite additional limitations similar to the limitations previously recited in original claim 23. Claims 30 and 31 depend from independent claims 7 and 8, respectively. As described above, claims 7 and 8 are believed to be allowable. Moreover, as stated by the Examiner with respect to claim 23, "calculating a first value representing a summation of the first printer's attributes for acting as the master; calculating a second value representing a summation of the second printer's attributes for acting as the master" is not disclosed or suggested by the prior art (Office Action, page 7, paragraph 22). As such the similar features recited in claims 30 and 31 also

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are not believed to be taught or otherwise suggested by the prior art. For at least these reasons, new claims 30 and 31 are believed to be allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 2-5, 7-12, 22-28, 30, and 31 are all in a condition for allowance and requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims.

Any inquiry regarding this Amendment and Response should be directed to either Nathan Rieth at Telephone No. (208) 396-5287, Facsimile No. (208) 396-3958 or Steven E. Dicke at Telephone No. (612) 573-2002, Facsimile No. (612) 573-2005. In addition, all correspondence should continue to be directed to the following address:

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Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this paper or papers, as described herein, are being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Fax No. (571) 273-8300 on this 31st day of January, 2006.

By Steven E. Dicke
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